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EOIA Case #42771

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

NSA STAFF PROCESSING FORM

TO DDP	EXREG CONTROL NUMBER 56935	KCC CONTROL NUMBER
THRU	ACTION <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	EXREG SUSPENSE 960508
SUBJECT VENONA CABLE #1822 (U).		KCC SUSPENSE
		ELEMENT SUSPENSE
DISTRIBUTION EXEC/DIR D/DIR DDS		
SUMMARY		

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

COORDINATION/APPROVAL

OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE	OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE

ORG. EXREG	PHONE (Secure) 963-3201	DATE PREPARED 960424
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April 17, 1996

(b) (6)

William P. Crowell
Deputy Director
National Security Agency
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6000

Dear Mr. Crowell:

I am writing to ask if you could let me know when exactly the Mar. 30, 1945 VENONA cable (#1822) referring to 'Ales' was actually broken into? Would it have been Aug. 8, 1969, the date at the bottom of the NSA document that was released last month, or did it occur much earlier, say between 1947 and 1952 when the bulk of the 1945 decrypts was done?

Also, are there any other cover names like 'Ales' in the VENONA traffic? In other words if Alger Hiss is this person, 'Ales' seems more like an acronym than a cryptonym and quite transparent whereas the names used to conceal identities of other Soviet spies in the material that has been made public so far do not seem to have such an obvious connection to the parties concerned.

In the Hiss exhibit at the Cryptological History museum, I understand there is a medal that Hiss is supposed to have gotten from the Soviets and I would appreciate it if you tell me the name of this award, how it was established that Hiss had received it and where and under what circumstances it had been given to him?

Thank you.
Sincerely,



James W. Hamilton, M.D.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

NSA STAFF PROCESSING FORM

TO N5P <i>5.13</i>	EXREG CONTROL NUMBER 56935	KCC CONTROL NUMBER DDP-10782
THRU N5P4	ACTION <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	EXREG SUSPENSE 960507 KCC SUSPENSE 960507 ELEMENT SUSPENSE
SUBJECT Response to a Request for Additional Information about VENONA		
DISTRIBUTION <i>(legends to CFR)</i> ExReg, DDP Registry, N5, N5P, N5P4, N5P5		
SUMMARY		

Dr. Hamilton wrote to Mr. Crowell with comments and some questions related to the release of the VENONA messages. Our policy has been to decline specific comment and allow the documents to speak for themselves for two reasons: fielding and researching questions could quickly overwhelm the limited personnel resources we have devoted to VENONA and interpretation of the information is best left to third-party historians rather than members of the USG.

In this case we are providing answers to two of his questions because the information was available from materials previously prepared in connection with the release and the effort to collect the information was minimal. His second question would require research, but information in the monographs provides a partial answer. We are including copies of all the monographs for his review.

COORDINATION / APPROVAL

OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE	OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE
N5P4	<i>Jae</i> 9 May				

ORIGINATOR Renee M. Frank <i>Renee M Frank</i>	ORG N5P4	PHONE (Secure) 963-5825	DATE PREPARED 2 May 1996
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NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

Serial: N5P/038/96
15 May 1996

Dr. James W. Hamilton

(b)(6)

Dear Dr. Hamilton:

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 1996. Concerning your first question, the date at the bottom of the ALES translation, 8 August 1969, is the date of the most recent translation of that message in our files. Throughout the declassification of the VENONA project, it has been our policy to release only the most complete final translation of a message. We refer you to page 7 of the first VENONA monograph for a discussion of when the documents were initially read.

The section beginning on page 6 of the first VENONA monograph provides some information about how covernames may have been grouped together and perhaps assigned. Because many covernames were never associated with real people, it has been difficult to establish particular patterns in the assignment of covername groups.

In response to your question about the National Cryptologic Museum exhibit, there are a number of authentic spycraft articles from the early 1940's on display along with replicas of VENONA messages and information about the Project. None of these articles is known to have any connection to the people mentioned in the messages, but they provide visual effect for the timeframe. Also, we know that ALES and his group were presented with medals from the GRU, but we don't know exactly which medals were awarded.

Enclosed for your review are copies of the three monographs we have published in connection with the release of VENONA documents. If we can be of assistance in the future, please contact Public Affairs at the address above. You may also obtain additional information about VENONA by calling up the NSA Homepage on the Internet. Our address is <http://www.nsa.gov:8080/>.


JAMES P. CAVANAUGH
Deputy Director of Policy

Encls:

a/s